

AN ANGER AND AGGRESSION GROUP FOR THIRD AND FOURTH
GRADE STUDENTS IN A RURAL SCHOOL

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An Anger and Aggression Group for Third and Fourth Grade Students in a Rural School

Setting

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Abstract

Children deal with anger in many different ways when they are growing up. Many children do not realize that anger is an emotion that needs to be expressed, and it can be done so in a number of positive, constructive ways. This project that resulted in an anger and aggression group for third and fourth grade students in a rural school setting can help children understand why it is so important to understand emotions of anger and learn how to express these emotions positively. The literature suggests by assessing children at a younger age, if parents/guardians, families, counselors and other school staff can combat the issue of school age children being unable to understand their feelings of anger and aggression. Families also need to support their child and the therapist by continuing to help the child learn and grow in the home.

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A Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Group Following a Pschyoeeducational Model for an
Anger and Aggression Group for Third and Fourth Grade Students in a Rural School

Setting

The research question for this project is, “How would the needs of younger elementary students experiencing problems with anger and aggression best be served in a rural school setting?” Anger can be many things in many different people. Anger can occur alone or simultaneously with aggression: in many cases anger is the precursor to aggression (Williams, Waymouth, Lipman, Mills, & Evans, 2004). Anger describes how an individual feels and aggression is the behaviors that are physical, hostile or emotional. For children, anger is an emotion they often struggle with because of poor role modeling or because they are unaware that there are positive ways to express anger (Deater-Deckard et al., 2010).

According to Parke & Gauvain (2009), there are different types of aggression. Reactive aggression is behavior that is used as a defense to a threat or to individual frustrations (Parke & Gauvain, 2009). It is more of an impulsive reaction and used when a child feels threatened. Adults often see it when a child steals another child’s toy. Proactive aggression occurs when force is used to dominate or threaten another person to gain something. Playground bullies show proactive aggression with other children. Relational or indirect aggression can damage or destroy interpersonal relationships by means of exclusion, gossip or defamation of character by girls and boys and their smaller social groups. Overt aggression is the physical behaviors expressed by children, such as, hitting, kicking, or threatening others. As children get older and anger and aggression has not been controlled early on, school performance may begin to decline and peers may

begin to reject the aggressor. Later, delinquency and vandalism can occur if not monitored closely by parents (Barry & Lochman, 2004).

According to Parke and Gauvain (2009), during the elementary school age years (7-10), gender differences begin to show in aggressive behavior. Boys rely on physical aggression and girls show signs of relational aggression. According to Farmer, Farmer, Estell and Hutchins (2007), boys tend to engage in direct bullying or aggression, girls tend to engage in indirect bullying including spreading rumors, gossiping or turning friends against each other. Although, either gender can show different types of aggression, girls and boys tend to show their aggression differently.

Anger and aggression can affect a child in many ways. According to Bidgood, Wilkie, and Katchaluba (2010), if children are unable to successfully manage their anger they may begin to have difficulties in school or at home and disrupt the people around them. Aggression can take on an array of forms, but according to Wilde (1996) and Espelage and Swearer (2003), it is now an eerily common occurrence to see young children with weapons in schools or assaulting teachers. According to Farmer et al. (2007), students who display their aggression through school violence are often trying to obtain justice for aggressive acts towards them earlier in their schooling. Aggression can get to a point of increased violence if children do not learn to process their anger and aggression in a healthy way (McWhirter, McWhirter, McWhirter, & WcWhirter, 2007). An anger and aggression group can help students recognize their signals towards increased feelings of anger, help them learn healthy ways to release that anger and help them learn to use positive anger release techniques outside of the group.

Many different statistics show a need for such a group. According to Twenmlow, Sacco, and Fonagy (2008), instances of violence with school-aged children has increased in recent years, which affects the social-behavior of students. The U.S. Department of Education (2012) indicated that although overall violence and bullying in schools has steadily decreased since 1992, violence and bullying has increased from 27 violent incidents per 1,000 students to 38 per 1,000 students in recent years. During the 2009-2010 school year, 85% of public schools reported having one or more serious violent incidents in primary schools (Department of Education, 2012). According to Grunbaum et al. (2004), 33% of students reported being in a physical fight 12 months prior to the survey and physical fighting was higher among boys (40.5%) than girls (25.1%). In addition, according to the 2012 U.S. Crime Statistics, youth under the age of 18 accounted for .05% of violent crime in the State of Alaska, which is in the top 10 in the United States (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2012). As a result, many schools are implementing anti-bullying/violence programs in an attempt to decrease aggressive behaviors in youth (Grunbaum et al., 2004; Simmons, 2010).

Literature Review

Research Findings

Many different anger management programs have been developed for youth, but little research has been done for students in the third and fourth grade. Research has been conducted for youth in mental health settings, school based groups for children exposed to domestic violence, and anger prevention programs (Williams, 2004; Bidgood, Wilkie, & Katchaluba, 2010; Leff et al., 2010).

Williams et al. (2004) examined the effectiveness of a group-cognitive therapy Temper-Taming Program to reduce anger and aggression with children between the ages of 7 and 13 in an outpatient children's mental health care center. After being referred to the Temper-Taming Program by clinicians based on aggressive behavior, children attended weekly 1-hour sessions for a total of 8 weeks. While children attended weekly sessions the parents also attended parent group sessions. The goals of the Temper-Taming Program were to increase awareness when tempers were increasing and teach children to problem solve and think through the consequences. The program was found helpful in reducing tempers in both boys and girls within the age group. Children were also able to build positive relationships within the group setting with each other and the counselor. Parents also saw a reduction in the frequency of aggression and hostility in their children based on the Children's Hostility Inventory (Williams et al., 2004).

Another program that has been successful in teaching anger and emotional management in youth is the Supporting Tempers, Emotions, and Anger Management (STEAM) program (Bidgood et al., 2010). STEAM is a program designed to help children and adolescents by teaching them to identify what emotions they are feeling and which skills to use to express those feelings in a positive manner. These positive means of emotional expression also work to increase emotional management skills. The goals of this program were to increase student self-control by reducing impulsive behavior, reducing intensity of temper situations, strengthening self-esteem, and improving interpersonal skills (Bidgood et al., 2010). STEAM was conducted on a broader range of students from grades one through eight, in sub-groups of grades one through three, four through six and seven through eight and focuses more on the emotions related to anger

instead of the management of their anger (Bidgood et al., 2010). STEAM also hoped to see improvements in student emotional and anger management by increasing the interaction between parents and teachers in the school. Teachers and principals in the school referred students and a questionnaire was sent home to help parents inform the professionals about their child's needs. Based on the post reports, improvement in emotional management skills was reported by parents and children in the youngest age group. Less improvement was shown in the children in grades four through six, and no significant change was shown in the older group. Overall, the results suggested it is more difficult to produce improvements in emotional management skills, as children get older (Bidgood et al., 2010).

Similar research has been conducted, but as prevention programs as opposed to a management program to help children understand their anger and aggression. Leff et al. (2010) developed a prevention program for youth within an urban school district called Preventing Relational Aggression in Schools Everyday (PRAISE) Program. This program is a 20-session classroom based program to help prevent relational aggression within school age boys and girls. The goals of the PRAISE Program were to see if the program would have positive effects on participants showing relational aggression towards others and to use the program classroom wide to help increase the problem solving skills within all of the children. After completing the PRAISE Program girls showed greater knowledge and lower levels of relational aggression and overt aggression. The boys in the program did not show any significant change in knowledge of relational or overt aggression.

Anger and Aggression Research

Aggression within a child can come from many different aspects in the child's life (Bandura, 1977; Watson, Fischer, Andreas, & Smith, 2004). The neighborhood, poor parenting practices, peers, and mass media all play a part in the development of aggression within children. Often times a child will learn from the interactions going on around them (e.g. family and peers).

According to Bandura (1977), parents who favor aggressive solutions to problems have children who tend to use similar tactics in social situations. Not only do children see the behavior in the household, but also some parents encourage their children to be aggressive by saying "be a man" or "defend yourself". Watson, Fischer, Andreas and Smith (2004) conducted a survey about the pathways to childhood aggression. They found that families with more conflict and less cohesion had children who exhibited higher inhibition and these children showed higher aggression. When children are in a house with parents fighting and arguing they begin to think it is appropriate behavior. Watson et al. (2004) also state that harsh physical punishment is associated with higher levels of aggression in children.

In an aggressive environment children do not learn how to resolve conflicts in positive ways (Parke & Gauvain, 2009). Parents also may use physical aggression as a form of punishment. Parke and Gauvain (2009), state that physical punishment is likely to lead to aggressive behavior in children. The lack of parenting also contributes to aggressive or delinquent behavior in children and adolescences (Parke & Gauvain, 2009) along with poor parenting practices (Barry & Lochman, 2004). When parents do not know where their children are, what they are doing or who they are with their children

could be playing violent video games learning the behaviors, joining a gang in the neighborhood or doing drugs.

Some parents may not be able to hide the violence from children because they are the victims themselves (Margolin & Gordis, 2004). Children who are living in violent situations may also experience other family conflict, poverty, parent's unemployment or parent's substance abuse. The children who are exposed to violence, of any kind, not only can develop aggressive behavior but a number of other problems as well. They can develop emotional and mood disorders, posttraumatic stress symptoms, sleep disturbances and academic and cognitive problems (Margolin & Gordis, 2004).

Parents are not the only people in the family who have an effect on behavior in younger children. If older siblings show signs of delinquent behavior, the younger sibling is more likely to show this behavior as well (Parke & Gauvain, 2009). Peers can also encourage disruptive behavior in youth and adolescents. Children who show higher levels of aggression early on in childhood can experience negative reactions from peers and teachers. This can then lead to antisocial behavior and when the child is presented with a social conflict, expecting aggressive behavior to work in solving the conflict, the can have difficulties interpreting the social situation. They may feel like a neutral response is hostile. This, in turn, makes the child more vulnerable to influences from deviant peer groups (Barry & Lochman, 2004). Peers not only lead other peers into aggressive or delinquent behavior, but they can also reject the aggressive behavior, which may also lead the child into more aggressive behavior. As peers begin to reject the child who is solving social conflicts with aggressive that child will have an increased level of aggression (Fraser, 1996; Parke & Gauvain, 2009). Fraser (1996) also states that

aggressive behavior has the consequence of isolating children from learning opportunities in socially skilled peer groups.

Parents and family is only one pathway to aggressive behavior in children and adolescences. Media such as video games and television also have an impact on the aggression shown in children (Anderson & Bushman, 2001). More and more parents are beginning to put their children in front of a television or gaming system to keep them busy. On television, problems are often solved by fighting and it becomes glorified because the bad guy loses and the superhero is the winner. Children on playgrounds all over the world will run around making gun noises or pretending to be a superhero catching a bad guy. This can lead to more aggressive behavior, but not always.

According to Anderson and Bushman (2001), the learning, rehearsal & reinforcement of aggression-related structures leads to aggressive beliefs, aggressive perception, aggressive behavior, which then leads to a more aggressive personality. After reviewing 54 independent tests involving 4262 participants their findings supported their correlation with violent video games and increased aggression.

One of the most notorious cases of a heightened level of aggression due to violent media is the Columbine shootings in Littleton, Colorado (Parke & Gauvain, 2009). Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold were highly fascinated with the violent video game Doom, and in turn, murdered 13 people (Anderson & Bushman, 2001). Since this tragic day in Colorado, many things have changed in the school system regarding threats and violent behavior. According to Kohn (2001), there were warning signs from the boys about the violence they were thinking of. They had been building bombs in their rooms, writing papers of the violence they intended to act out and posting names of people they wanted

to kill on a website created by Harris. Since the Columbine shootings in April 1999 police departments have changed policies to take action immediately instead of stand by and wait (Kohn, 2001).

The parents of Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris have largely stayed silent since the tragic day in April (Simpson, 2009). Their parents have kept silent mostly because of the public opinions that swirled around them, ranging from sympathy to criticism and blame for failing to notice, or address, warning signs of potential violence (Simpson, 2009). Both families did issue statements of sympathy towards the other families involved, but some people could not accept the fact that they allowed their children to commit such a crime. In May 2004, David Brooks of the New York Times sat down to interview Tom Klebold, father of Dylan Klebold. He stated that there Dylan was brought up in a loving and caring environment, so he does not know why Dylan would commit such a cruel act of violence (Brooks, 2004). Susan Klebold (2009) wrote, she can remember the times that Dylan loved school and communicated with his parents on a regular basis. She believes that Dylan may have been ashamed of having the feelings of anger and aggression so he acted them out in such a violent way. Since the incident in April 1999, the Klebold family has not moved or changed jobs. Although the newspaper columnists may write that it was their fault because they did not know what was happening under their own roof, they still live their life day to day, without their son (Klebold, 2009).

Violent television and movies can also lead to higher levels of aggression in children and adolescences. Television viewing can affect children differently depending on their cognitive abilities (Parke & Gauvain, 2009). According to Bandura (1977), children and adolescents who are repeatedly show violent films typically increase

interpersonal aggressiveness in everyday life. Bandura (1977) also believed that televised violence could have four different effects on viewers: 1) it teaches aggressive styles of conduct, 2) it alters restraints over aggressive behavior, 3) it desensitizes and habituates people to violence, and 4) it shapes people's images of reality upon which they base many of their actions. This eventually will cause difficulties in public situations when dealing with conflict (Anderson & Bushman, 2001).

Another pathway to aggression in children and adolescents is community and neighborhoods. As children get older, the pathways to aggression begin to change. According to Fraser (1996), children who grow up in neighborhoods where schools are weak, where opportunities for conventional activities are blocked, where adults are committed to illicit activities and where gangs offer alternative social roles and financial rewards, children are more likely to use aggression in their daily lives. Joining a gang is likely to increase violent activity and individuals in a gang are three times more likely to engage in violent offenses than those who are not (Parke & Gauvain, 2009). According to Barry & Lochman (2004), living in crime-ridden neighborhoods also adds to the environmental risk factors leading to seriously aggressive, problematic behavior. Community violence can also lead to problems such as depression and anxiety (Margolin & Gordis, 2004).

This information shows that there is a need for an anger management group for a more specified group of students. It also shows that anger and aggression can come from different aspects of the child's life. This smaller group will help to clearly focus on more specific anger and aggression management skills and focus on where their anger may be coming from.

Theoretical Framework

One theory to be used to facilitate this anger management group is cognitive behavioral therapy. Cognitive behavioral group therapy focuses on changing cognitions to produce desired behavior and affect changes (Corey, Corey & Corey, 2010). While some models of therapy focus on the past to see how behaviors occurred, cognitive behavioral group therapy focuses on the here and now of each person's life. Focusing on past experiences is not the only way to initiate change in a member (Gazda, Ginter, and Horne, 2001). In addition, group will focus on how a member wants to change their cognitions and more time will be spent on what skills are desired and needed to help the child change the behaviors they would like to change. Using cognitive behavioral group therapy will help target specific skills to help the group members reduce anger and aggression (Williams et al., 2004). It will be the job of the counselor to ask the students why they think other people make them angry and to question why they allow people to make them angry (Wilde, 1996).

Cognitive behavioral group therapy will help each child explore the anger they feel during certain situations, such as hard school work, another child or a disagreement with a parent. It will also help the child decide if the situation is meant as aggression towards them or if it is an obstacle they need to work through, since aggressive children are more likely to interpret others' ambiguous actions as hostile (Williams et al., 2004). Allowing each student to identify the problem and respond to each problem in an appropriate manner during group, will help them take those skills outside the group to show lower signs of aggression Lockman, Nelson, & Sims, 1981; Williams et al., 2004).

Using a psychoeducational approach to work with children showing signs of anger and aggression is also a positive approach. Psychoeducational groups focus on skill development that uses group-based educational and developmental strategies (DeLucia-Waack, 2006). Psychoeducational groups also help group members develop knowledge and skills for coping in situations that make them feel angry outside the group (Jones & Robinson, 2000). This group will focus on teaching specific skills and coping strategies in order to prevent a specific problem. Within this psychoeducational group, there will be a common group goal set by the group and then each individual member can choose what skills they want to work on to effectively work on that goal. Therefore, the group structure will be very organized because the therapist is working to teach a new skill. A psychoeducational approach to this group will work because the counselor will be helping each student learn new skills to use when the group ends. Since the group is only eight weeks long it is important for each member to focus on the skills taught each week. It will be carefully organized by the group leader/counselor so the members are working on skills they can use in the situations they have encountered before the group.

Application

The anger and aggression group will be used in an elementary, rural school setting. When creating a group, many different aspects need to be taken into consideration before beginning the group. The appropriate theories need to be considered, how members of the group will be chosen, how to work with members at different stages of the group and how to effectively end a group.

Group Formation

The first step in creating this group will be to conduct a needs assessment (Corey et al., 2010). A needs assessment can be completed in many ways, but for children the counselor can seek out information from teachers and local counseling agencies for what has worked in the past and what they see a need for now with the youth in the community. This step is important because the counselor needs to make sure there is a need or a want in the community before recruiting begins (Corey et al., 2010). Upon completion of a needs assessment, the counselor should decide on the general goal for the group, in order to select appropriate group members. The counselor could also ask the teachers and staff what groups they think would be appropriate and create a group from that information as well. For this group, the general goal will be to learn how to recognize and manage anger and aggression in an appropriate way.

The next step in forming this group will be for the counselor to decide on the group size, number of sessions and length of each session (Corey et al., 2010). This group will take place in a school setting, after school, once a week for 50 minutes for 6 weeks. This group will be a closed group so only students who have been screened to attend will be allowed to come into the group sessions. There will be a school bus to pick up the students that may need transportation home at a later time.

Recruiting members for this group in a school setting should involve administrators, counselors, teachers, parents or a self-referral is possible (DeLucia-Waack, 2006). The counselor can inform the teachers, other counselors and parents know of the group through email or mail and they can refer students to the group. The group will be available for children in the school that may need support in learning to

control their feelings of anger and aggression in grades three and four and six to eight children will be in the group at a time. According to DeLucia-Waack (2006), the people who refer students to the group should not expect a report back, but the counselor should help them understand the responsibilities they have to uphold rules of confidentiality. Confidentiality has to be upheld, even when working with children. When getting a referral for the group the counselor should take some time to get specific information about the child. This is an important step because the counselor can understand why this child is being referred and if they will fit in the group.

Once the counselor has members being referred he or she can start the interview and screening process (Gazda et al., 2001). For each potential participant it is important to go over the information of the group. At this point in the individual interviews the counselor should inform the participants of the reason for the group, the expectations of the group, the number of people in the group, the leaders and an overview of how the group will run (DeLucia-Waack, 2006). According to Gazda et al. (2001), it is important that the group is not misrepresented and all of the information about the group is readily available. It is also important to screen potential members of the group for appropriateness. An example screening tool is found in Appendix A.

Goals can also be set during the screening and interview process. When the therapist meets with each potential group member they will go over the goals they would like to achieve at the end of the therapy sessions. Some examples of goals children might have are: "I want to understand where my anger comes from", "I want to understand why I get angry", "I want safe ways to release my anger" (Gazda et al., 2001).

Once the group members have been selected and a group is ready to begin the counselor needs to have a pre-group meeting (Corey et al., 2010). This is the time to set expectations for the group, set procedures and prepare members for what to expect. Some common group expectations are trust, confidentiality, honesty, right to pass, right to participate, listening, take risks, attendance and be on time. This is also a good time to discuss the things that may be written down in your notes over the course of the group. According to Corey et al. (2010), providing the group members with some information that will be recorded shows the members of the group that the leader is willing to be honest.

During the pre-group meeting, the counselor should include the parents to discuss confidentiality and informed consent. Since the children participating in the group are under 18 years of age their parents do have the right to find out what is happening in counseling with their children. According to the American School Counselors Association Code of Ethics (ASCA) (2010), the counselor should make a reasonable effort to honor the wishes of the parents unless there is a court order to forbid the parents from seeing anything. The counselor should also respect the confidentiality of parents/guardians to the extent that is reasonable to protect the best interest of the child being counseled (ASCA, 2010).

Providing parents with a written informed consent allows parents to understand the expectations, goals, and confidentiality boundaries of the group. Not only will the parents hear the information, but the children will also need to hear the information as well. When working with children it is important to fully discuss confidentiality so they understand it. The group members need to understand that if they give information in a

group session that makes the counselor think they could hurt themselves or someone else, it is the counselors responsibility to report that information to the proper authority (i.e. police, parents). When working in a group with, what could be their friends; it may be hard for children to refrain from talking about group together. At the pre-group meeting the members can ask to not be acknowledged by other members outside the group. It is important for members of the group to let others know if they have a friendship outside of the group so they do not think, for example, they are talking about the other person at lunch one day. If relationships outside the group are made clear in the beginning no one has to be alarmed when they see it (DeLucia-Waack, 2006). This group will focus on understanding their anger and emotions, developing positive social interaction skills, learning to make responsible decisions and learning how to express anger in ways that are not harmful to themselves or others (Davies, 2000).

Initial Stage

During this stage of group, members are still trying to learn about the group and about the other members of the group. According to Jones and Robinson (2000), members are usually feeling more anxious and less comfortable about the group during this stage of development. At this initial session, the counselor will take the time to explore member's expectations, clarify goals of the group, and answer any questions about the group or the process. As this point in therapy, the members of the group are deciding how they can trust a group of strangers to keep their secrets; confidentiality is a major concern for each member of the group, including the counselor (Corey et al., 2010).

As a group they can come up with goals they all want to work on during the initial stage of group as well. This could be learning to problem solve when they recognize their first warning signs of anger (Williams et al., 2004). Some children may not know what their warning signs are so the group can brainstorm some things that happen with they get angry. An activity to help meet this goal could be to make a list of alternative choices to their problems. Some of the alternative choices are walking away, ignoring, go to another game, cool down or ask an adult for assistance. During the process of the group the alternative choices will be practiced so the group members can feel successful outside the group if a problem does occur.

It is very important for the counselor to help increase the cohesion of the group (DeLucia-Waack, 2006). Group cohesiveness can help the group feel safe and successful in the end. One way to enhance the cohesion of the group is to develop a “secret” handshake. The kids may enjoy having something that is just for that group and it can be used at the beginning and the end of each session. It is a good way to let the group know that the session is coming to an end (Wilde, 1996). The counselor should allow the group time to get to know one another as well. At the end of the initial session the counselor should take some time to ask the members how they thought group went. They can also discuss things they learned and some things that made them feel comfortable in the group setting (DeLucia-Waack, 2006). These questions help the group members understand that the counselor is looking out for their needs and interest in the group. These questions should be asked throughout the entire duration of the group. A great way to help the group grow is to create a group name, for example, Angry Birds is the name of the group referenced in this paper.

Initial Stage Activities

There are different activities the counselor can do to help the members feel a sense of trust, comfortable and willing to open up. First, group members can partner up with one other to discuss what the group means to them and what they hope to get out of it. They can choose to tell the other person something personal about themselves as well. This activity is a way to help group members to open up and begin trusting each other with information about their lives. Also, during the initial stage of the group the counselor will work on explaining the difference between clean and dirty anger. Dirty anger is why they are attending the group. They have a hard time controlling their anger; they hit, kick, scream, curse or hurt others in some way. It is okay to express anger, but children need to learn to do it in a positive manner. Examples of clean anger could include pushing a wall, running, tearing old paper, punching a pillow or mattress or writing a letter to release anger (Whitehouse & Pudney, 1996).

Another activity to help them understand their anger and show each other they are going through the same feelings is an illustration activity. Each group member experiences their anger in different ways. This activity is to let the children illustrate what happens to them (i.e. red face, shaking, yelling, hitting, etc.). (Whitehouse & Pudney, 1996). Finally, the counselor can introduce the grudge jar (Whitehouse & Pudney, 1996). The grudge jar can be used in groups for members who come in feeling angry. They can write down what they are angry about at the beginning of group and put it in the jar. Each child can choose to talk about anger in the session or choose to destroy the paper at the end. For the current group the children will have the option to come into group sessions and choose an egg to describe how they are feeling that day. Some

choices may be cracked, scrambled, hard-boiled, fried, whole, etc. Each of the egg choices will have a meaning or feeling that will be decided by the group in the beginning sessions. These are just simple activities to help the children feel more like a cohesive group in the initial stage.

Group Facilitation

In the initial stages of the group, the counselor will be the teacher who will be helping each member of the group to define change expectations and how behavior change occurs (Gazda et al., 2001). Often times the counselor helps to explain that behaviors are learned, detailing the process of gaining new behaviors, and discussing how the group can learn these new behaviors. The group is usually in a very nervous or anxious state because they are unsure of each other and unsure of the group. The counselor will work with the group to help them feel comfortable. Part of feeling comfortable within the group is learning to trust one another.

Members of the group need to feel comfortable being in the group. That is what counselor will do, and it is very important during the initial stage of the group. The counselor should be caring. According the DeLucia-Waack (2006), helping the members feel cared about, safe and accepted helps the members to take risks, give feed back, and try out new behaviors. They need to believe they will not be judged, especially by the counselor. The counselor also needs to create structure in the group. By creating group norms as a group, this will help them understand that there are ground rules that will help them feel safe within the group.

Transitional Stage

During the transitional stage of group, the children are getting over the awkwardness of being in a group and are usually starting to act more like themselves (DeLucia-Waack, 2006). It is during this stage of group that the counselor will begin to use more confrontation techniques to help the members of the group use the new techniques they have been learning in group sessions. Before a member of the group can successfully use the new techniques outside the group they should already be showing the changes in group sessions (Gazda et al., 2001). According to Corey et al. (2010), ending each group with a cohesive activity is a positive way to build trust between the members. This can be done by a group squeeze circle or by sharing a snack and discussing what they learned that day during the group session. In the current group, students can choose a different egg at the end of the session to describe how they may be feeling after they have been able to discuss their feelings for the day.

Working Stage

According to DeLucia-Waack (2006), members should feel safer during the working stage of group to begin to try new behaviors and give feedback to each other. This stage of the group can often times be hard to reach because it requires a certain level of trust and honesty from each member of the group. Challenging members of the group can show another level of trust from other group members as long as they are willing.

During the working stage of this group the counselor will ask members to reflect on the here and now (DeLucia-Waack, 2006). They can do this by asking them to reflect on an instance that worked well during group. This will give them an idea of what worked and how it helped them. The counselor can ask members to reflect on a part of

the group that did not work so well for them. By asking them to think what did not work, they can decide what needs to be changed so they can feel successful. Finally, the counselor will ask the members to reflect on their goals from time to time. This is important because members can decide what has helped them in the group sessions to help them achieve their goals or what has not helped.

Activities

An activity the counselor can use during the working stage is time out. Time out has been known as a negative thing in the past. Children need to know that they can give themselves a time out if they are angry and worried they might hurt someone or themselves. Discussing different ideas for time out activities as a group can be helpful for each member to understand it is acceptable to take a break to cool down. The counselor could have a “break area” in the room as a way to practice. The counselor should also speak to teacher of students involved in the group and suggest a “break area” in their classroom to support the work in the group. This will also help the student practice skills they are learning in the group outside of the group. The student can use this area to give themselves a break from others if they begin to feel angry or show aggression can use this chair. The area should have paper and pencils so the student can write or draw to release their anger if needed.

Another activity to use during the working stage of group is learning about the safe ways of getting angry (Whitehouse & Pudney, 1996). The counselor will begin by reviewing ways the children express anger negatively. This could be throwing things, hitting others, destroying property or using inappropriate language. These things need to

be identified as dirty ways to express anger. Most children do not know that it is okay to feel angry, but there are ways to release those feelings in a safe manner.

When the negative behaviors have been identified and discussed, creating a chart showing the ways the children can safely release their anger can be helpful. Some examples are: telling people how they feel, write down how you feel, talk to someone, write letters, do something physical (e.g. running, punching bag, etc.) or get support from other people in their lives (Whitehouse & Pudney, 1996). When the children have brainstormed a good list, they can choose what they think might work best for them. It is also a good idea to practice these new behaviors in group, so they can feel successful when they try it out of group.

Ending a Group

When ending a group with children it is important for them to see what a healthy end to a relationship looks like (Corey et al., 2010). The children should be reminded two or three sessions in advance that the group will be coming to an end so they can work through any feelings of separation they may be experiencing. During the termination period, with children it can be beneficial to allow them to help build the ending sessions. They can discuss their individual strengths, how they plan to continue using what they have learned in group and their plans to take care of themselves (Corey et al., 2010). Also according to Corey et al. (2010), since this is a closed group, taking this time to give each other feedback about the information they have learned during the group sessions is very important

It is important to bring the group to a solid close because it gives each member of the group a chance to evaluate what they have learned and if it was helpful (DeLucia-

Waack, 2006). If the group was not helpful and a member of the group feels that they would like to continue receiving services, the counselor is responsible for helping that member find those services (Gazda et al., 2001). Ending a group should be done over two or three sessions so the group does not feel abandoned and they walk away with a positive experience (Corey et al., 2010).

Group Sessions

Session 1: Goals (a) introduce group rules, and (b) self-awareness between members by noting differences between members physically, behaviorally, and emotionally. Activities: (a) introduce the feeling eggs and as a group decide what they will mean for the remainder of the group meetings, and (b) allow the students to discuss what they hope to get out of the group.

Session 2: Goals: (a) Explain the difference between clean and dirty anger and (b) explore what makes each student angry. Activities: (a) allow the children to illustrate what their anger and aggression looks like, blank paper and colors should be accessible.

Session 3: Goal: Problem identification, members learn what can lead to anger and aggression. Activities: role-playing and identifying problems in drawings and story telling.

Session 4: Goal: Differentiate between healthy and unhealthy ways to express anger. Activities: role-play (expressing feelings in words, write letters, physical activities, and find a support group).

Session 5: Goals: (a) Learn how to use practiced activities outside of group (b) introduce time out or break area and (c) discuss what ending the group will look like and how it will feel. Activities: role-play situations the children may find themselves in when

they are interacting with others outside of the group. Practice using the time out area so the students can be successful using it outside the group.

Session 6: Goal: Practice using skills learned in past sessions. Activities: role-play and discuss anger and aggression control outside the group at home or as school.

Potential Problem Situations

Because the group will be formed around the topic of anger and aggression the counselor could have issues with group members becoming angry or showing signs of aggression towards other members. In order to prevent scapegoating, the counselor should make the boundaries and ground rules very clear at the beginning of group (DeLucia-Waack, 2006). The next potential problem in this group could be the differences in gender involved in the group. Some members may not want to participate if the opposite gender is in the group. It is then important for the counselor to help the children of the group understand why they feel this way towards the opposite gender and how they can resolve that as a group. This would also be something that should be addressed in the interview and screening process.

Towards the end of the group sessions, members may begin to worry about ending. Some members may begin to distance themselves from the group so they do not feel the pain of the separation. According to Corey et al. (2010), many people have experienced negative or unhealthy goodbyes so the counselor needs to help the group understand what a healthy goodbye looks like by taking the time to end the group properly. Ending the group properly may take two or three sessions to help the members prepare for the final good-bye from the group. This includes modeling from the counselor so the children can see what a healthy goodbye looks like.

Conclusion

Children deal with anger in many different ways when they are growing up. Many children do not realize that anger is an emotion that needs to be expressed, but can be done so in a number of healthy ways. This group can help children understand why it is so important to understand your emotion of anger learn how to express it positively. Parents/guardians/families also need to support their child and the therapist by continuing to help the child learn and grow in the home.

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Appendix A

Group Participant Screening and Interview (Adapted from DeLucia-Waack, 2006)

My name is Heather Ley. I am the school counselor here at Eagle's View Elementary. I would like to share some basic information related to group so you have a sense of what group is about.

The goals of this group are to learn their warning signs of feelings of anger, the difference between clean anger and dirty anger, and to learn ways to release anger in positive ways. Groups can be beneficial in this process. They allow the children to learn from each other, meet others with similar concerns, and practice new behaviors

This group is a Psychoeducational group with cognitive behavioral components. This means that many of the group's activities are included to teach each participant basic skills or behaviors they can use in their daily lives; skills such as learning to control feelings of anger and releasing those feelings in a healthy way. This is not a counseling group, so we will not be focusing on big personality changes. Now, what questions do you have for me? I invite you to ask questions and look over the group's curriculum.

Administrative Issues:

- I will be the leader of the group
- There will be 6 to 8 participants in the group as well
- Our group will meet for 6 sessions. Each session will last 50 minutes
- The group will meet in Mrs. Ley's third grade classroom every Wednesday from 2:30pm to 3:20pm.
- There is a bus for after school transportation if needed

Appendix B**Letter to Parents**

Dear Parent/Guardians:

My name is Heather Ley. I am the school counselor at Eagle's View Elementary and I will be the leader of the anger and aggression group your child will participate in for the next 6 weeks. I would like to share some basic information related to the group so you have a sense of what group is about.

This group will meet every Wednesday from 2:30-3:20 in my classroom at Eagle's View Elementary. There will be a bus to transport your child after the group if needed.

The goals of this group will be to learn their warning signs of feelings of anger, the difference between clean anger and dirty anger, and to learn ways to release anger in positive ways. Groups can be beneficial in this process. They allow the children to learn from each other, meet others with similar concerns, and practice new behaviors

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If you have any questions please feel free to contact me by phone at 907-581-3979 or by email at hley@ucsd.net.

Thank you,

Heather Ley

Appendix C

Ground Rules for the group:

In order for group to work effectively, we must be able to share personal information. You will not be forced to share something you consider private. Share only the information you feel comfortable sharing.

- Students will be encouraged to participate in all activities.
- There will be no fighting or hurting other members of the group.
- Each group member is responsible for practicing skills outside of group.
- Confidentiality is very important. Nothing said or done inside of group is to be talked about outside of group. All group members will have this same expectation. There are limits to this expectation. These relate to injury to yourself or others, abuse, if your parents ask about group or when the courts require it.
- You will be asked to share your reactions to activities
- Everyone needs to be on time for group.

Appendix D

Questions to ask to assess appropriateness for group

1. Do you have any questions about anything that has been said so far? Do you have any other questions for me?
2. Can you give me some examples of when you have been angry?
3. Tell me some times when you have not been able to control your feelings of anger? What happened then?
4. Are you willing to talk about these things with other students who may be having the same problems?
5. What would you like to change about your behaviors when you become angry?
6. Are you willing to work on progress towards your goals?
7. Do you think this group can help you meet these goals?
8. How do you work with others?
9. Can you keep what others say confidential? Can you follow the other rules of the group?

*I would invite the parents to the screening and interview process so they can understand the group as well. I would also be sure to discuss the questions with the student so they could answer to the best of their ability.